Capital as a subject and the idealistic character of the Hegelian dialectic

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Abstract: The present paper takes as its object the reading that Riccardo Bellofiore makes of the link between Marx and Hegel. Bellofiore argues that Hegel's idealism is due to expressing the real movement of capital, but attributing to the dialectic of the Absolute a circularity that capital lacks, since to achieve this condition it must overcome the resistance of the working class. In contrast to Bellofiore's proposal, our thesis is that Hegel represents the autonomization of capital as a subject as if it were that of thought of its social determinations.

Key words: Dialectics, Capital, Hegel, Bellofiore, Subject, Idealism

Introduction

The question of the link between Marx and Hegel has been the subject of debate in the Marxist camp since its inception. Recently, and with the help of a group of thinkers who have focused on the methodological aspect of the critique of political economy developed by Marx, this topic has regained vitality as an object of discussion. The present work aims to insert itself into this general field of studies, contributing to the clarification of the link between the question of capital as a subject of social life under the capitalist mode of production and that of Marx's link with Hegel. To this end, we will focus on the work of Riccardo Bellofiore, who is one of the authors framed in the *Systematic Dialectic* (SD hereinafter).

We are interested in focusing our work on Bellofiore because he is an exponent of those who maintain that the idealist character of the Hegelian dialectic is due to the fact that it reflects the inversion of capital, thus hypostasizing its condition as a subject of social life. Bellofiore affirms that capital is a subject that must demonstrate this condition by overcoming the resistance of the working class, which it does not necessarily achieve. Therefore, the Hegelian dialectic, as conceptually expressed by a movement that is capable of setting its own conditions – the Idea – hypostasises an unfolding that in reality does not succeed in founding itself, capital. Hence it does not do justice to the way in which this alienated subject really operates, which in order to postulate its presuppositions must defeat a subject-other that is capable of stopping its movement, the working class.

In the face of this thesis, we will argue that the idealist character of the Hegelian dialectic is not due to the fact that it supposes a circular movement that capital is unable to achieve. We will affirm that this character responds to the fact that Hegel autonomizes thought from its material determinations, which leads him to attribute to consciousness the capacity to set itself in motion. Thus, Hegel philosophically expresses the autonomization of the organization of social labor proper to capital, taking it idealistically as the autonomization of the consciousness of its material determinations.

To unfold our hypothesis, the paper will consist of three fundamental sections. In the first of them, we will recover the substantial contributions of the SD with respect to the Marx-Hegel relationship, in order to situate Bellofiore's perspective. Having done this, we will proceed to expose the specific argument of this author on the Marx-Hegel link, stopping at his explanation of the idealist character of Hegelian philosophy. After accompanying this explanation, we will point out the points that we find problematic, and finally move on to the development of our perspective.

The Systematic Dialectic and the Link Between Hegel and Marx

The authors framed in the approach known as *SD* have in the *Neue Marx-Lektüre* their main antecedents, a current whose core was the contributions of Helmut Reichelt and Hans-Georg Backhaus, made in the mid-sixties in West Germany. The *Neue Marx-Lektüre*, in turn, is based on Rubin's interpretation of the theory of value, which has the value-form as its master key.

Methodologically, *SD* is a perspective that accentuates the dialectical development of the categories of the Marxian critique of political economy, emphasizing their relationship with *Hegel's Science of Logic*, an aspect that will give rise to our analysis.

Within the SD, Patrick Murray argues that the logic of Hegelian essence, which is based on showing that it appears in a way that is distinguishable from itself, is presupposed in Marx's theory of value, which differentiates it from Ricardo's. In this case, it is a question of value as essence, the form of which is the exchange value enshrined in money. The latter, in the circulation of commodities, appears as the opposite of the accumulation of use-values which determine it. Murray writes: "money's retroversion from the particular use-values (commodity circulation) ends in self-annihilation rather than self-immortalization. To achieve immortality, money must be transformed into capital". Money, in

order to preserve itself and remain money, must be removed from the sphere of circulation, it must transcend the world of commodities. On the contrary, in capital, the essence reflected in money remains as such when it is in motion, immanently traversing the world of use-values without losing its identity as value. Capital is thus value in process, which takes the form of a commodity and takes the form of money again, as clothes that it puts on and in which it is not lost. That is, it is value in motion, value that stops value. Although it manifests itself as something other than itself and thus presupposes the Hegelian logic of essence, its circulation as a subject conforms to the logic of the concept. For this reason, the logic of the concept proposed by Hegel constitutes, according to Murray, a crucial point for thinking about Marx's specificity with respect to Ricardo, which is synthesized in the dialectic of the value form.

Tony Smith, part of the SD but with a different position from Murray's, rejects that Hegel's philosophy has an idealist character. The task of philosophy, according to its perspective, is to appropriate the categories that we use uncritically in our experience. Hegel, as the most complete expression of this enterprise, unfolds the categories involved in the knowledge of the world and dialectically develops their internal interlocking, which impels them to reach greater levels of complexity and concreteness. Smith says: "What is of interest to the philosopher is the fact that it is impossible to engage in discourse without employing categories, whether our discourse concerns metaphysics, the empirical sciences, religion, or events in the everyday world. The philosophical appropriation of immediately given experience is an appropriation of categories".

Hegel's philosophy would not be idealistic because it reduces the material world to categories of thought. Nor would he assert that the dialectic of categories is identical to that which operates in the totality of the real, but that, again, he would limit himself to reconstructing their fundamental determinations. That is to say, Hegel would not make the material world the identical reproduction of the ideal, nor would he seek to reduce the former to the latter. Precisely for this reason, Smith maintains that Marx takes dialectics from Hegel. This is the philosophical proposal that sustains the Marxian method, since Marx himself, according to Smith, proceeds by taking certain categories, the most abstract, such as those that by their own development allow us to think about the concreteness and complexity of the real. Another way of saying that Marx takes from Hegel the need to place the mediation of all phenomena by their essential structure. That is to say, Marx takes every determination as an unfolded form of its internal structure, understandable only if it is conceptualized mediated by the most general categories. Smith says: "To put the point as provocatively as possible: the Marxist approach *to* political economy is correct *because* Hegel's theory of the syllogism is correct." The emphasis on relations and on the need for a categorical ordering of phenomena would thus relate Marx's method to that of Hegel.

The developments of Thomas Sekine and Christopher Arthur – who is one of the eminent figures of the SD and in our view the foundation of Bellofiore as far as our work is concerned – with respect to the link between Marx and Hegel have certain similarities.

Sekine argues that the dialectic of capital is identical to that of the Hegelian Absolute. This dialectic governs capital whenever it manages to overcome the contradiction between value and use value. That is, it is what moves capital once it, as a form, appropriates the material wealth necessary to reproduce human life. However, Sekine differentiates the dialectic of capital from that between being and nothingness, typical of the Hegelian system. He says:

> But a fundamental difference seems to me to exist between 'use-value' and 'naught'. Although from the point of view of the materialist dialectic, value representing capital, its subject, prevails over use-value in order to synthesize capitalism, the real implication is that this can be done only in so far as the use-value side permits it. For capitalism is historically transient. This means that the real winner in the end is use-value (concrete wealth for human beings), which will remain even after the death of value (abstract wealth sought by capital). This is different from the implication of Hegel's dialectic of the Absolute.

As long as nothingness is passive, it is definitively superseded by being without offering resistance to its dialectical progress. On the other hand, the "space" of use value persists beyond capitalism since it is a question of material wealth, whether or not it assumes the commodity form. This condition can threaten the reproduction of capitalism, since it is potentially external to it. That is, since capitalism is a transitory way of producing social wealth, the dialectic that presides over it will fall once the "space" of use value adopts another social organization. On the contrary, the Hegelian Absolute has no exterior, there is no determination that it cannot incorporate into its dialectic.

Christopher Arthur analyzes the link between Marx and Hegel in a similar way. He explains that value is an attribute that is manifested in exchange. Recovering certain aspects of Hegel's argumentation, he emphasizes that Hegel, as essence, does not exist except when it succeeds in manifesting itself in its appearance, that is, when it finds a commodity in whose body it actualizes power. In money, then, commodities unfold into a thing that is external to them, and then they have their universal changeability in front of them, which allows them to manifest themselves as essence. Arthur writes, "As the immediate equivalent of all commodities, money solves the qualitative problem of value through its pure ideality, creating a virtual space—the dimension of value."

As the general representative of wealth, money is thus an abstraction which makes concrete commodities mere specimens of it, species in which value is realized. That is why, for Arthur, money is the first figure in which there is the real abstraction in which the world governed by commodities consists, the one in which the concrete-sensible is a support that takes the abstract-universal.

With capital, this determination is enriched. In the M-M-M' cycle, value not only exists for itself, as its own object, but as its own result, as a multiplication product of its own work. Just as in money value existed for itself, detached from the specific circumstances of exchange, so in capital this value for itself, according to Arthur, produces itself. With capital, value as a separate form attains its fullest determination.

For Arthur, in Marx's exposition in *Capital,* with the general formula of capital, use value has been neglected, it has been denied in order to see the common form of the commodity as an exchangeable product. However, it is in the sphere of use value, he says, that capital becomes "a real power in the world." But in it, capital confronts its negation: labor. Thus, capital, in order to become an absolute subject, must negate this negation in order to subsume labor in its own movement, a condition of which is to defeat the working class in the class struggle in order to extract its labor time. Therefore, for Arthur, capital is a proto-subject, which in order to show itself as such must produce its own conditions of existence. In this transition, he must deal with a subject that is at the same time placed by himself: the proletariat. This internal other, whose strength capital must bend, turning it into a mere accessory, "objectifying its activity, expropriating its product and colonizing its consciousness," has the potential capacity to revolutionize it. Therefore, in order to prove itself as an absolute reality, it must subordinate the material reality of labor, producing it as its own presupposition. Only then does capital really become what it was as a form in its general figure. This is where Arthur introduces the parallelism between capital and the Hegelian Idea. Both must immerse themselves in the world of otherness to verify that they are subjects in the full sense; one in front of living labor, the other in front of Nature. Just as capital must subordinate the world of production, in which it must prove itself as an absolute subject by appropriating the labor of the proletariat, a requirement of which is to bend it in the class struggle, so the Concept must separate itself from itself in Nature, in order to conform it to its image and likeness.

But this is also where Arthur founds the difference between materialist and Hegelian dialectics. While the Idea has the capacity to subsist in itself, to be founded, capital *may* not do so. Arthur writes: "Unfortunately for capital, it cannot actualize itself and conquer all its presuppositions of existence as easily as the Hegelian Idea supposes. The real reality is material." Thus, while the Idea is capable of manifesting itself in Nature, penetrating it and returning to its bosom, capital must, for that, defeat the

working class to put it as its own presupposition, mediating this process the class struggle. As we have said, Arthur constitutes the fundamental support, in this aspect, of Bellofiore's work. Let us move on to the exposition of the latter's proposal, which will recover a good part of the difficulties presented by Arthur's.

Bellofiore: Capital as a Subject and the Difference Between Marx and Hegel

Bellofiore recovers from Arthur's exposition that Hegelian ontology, because it is idealistic, reproduces what is proper to the movement of capital: the real abstraction that constitutes it. Just as the Hegelian Idea consists in the conversion of thought into an autonomous subject, so capital as a value that is valorized is separated from the conditions that produced it. Therefore, Hegel's logic reproduces the movement of capital, not in spite of its idealist character but *because* of it. Bellofiore summarizes: "The isomorphism between Hegel's logic and the actuality of capital is valid, and – Arthur concludes – the homology with the Idea is precisely a reason for criticizing it as an inverted reality where self-moving abstractions have the upper hand over human beings."

The matrix of Arthur's and Bellofiore's own arguments, as he himself acknowledges, is the development of the late sixties and early seventies carried out by Lucio Colletti. Colletti affirms that the general social relation, value, is independent of the individuals who become its bearers and mediators. In this way, the value that is valorized is constituted as an external power that dominates individuals and exists through the circulation of the commodities that express it. Bellofiore writes: "The 'abstract universal', which ought to be the property of the concrete, becomes a self- subsisting entity and an active subject, with the concrete and sensuous counting only as the form of manifestation of the abstract-universal –the predicate of its own substantialised predicate. For Colletti Hegel's dialectical logic is nothing but the 'peculiar method for the peculiar object', *precisely due to his absolute idealism*."

Hegel's dialectical logic, therefore, reproduces the inversion proper to the society it tries to know, thus being its faithful reflection. That is why Colletti writes: "the conversion of the fact into a metaphysical axiom, that is, into a receptacle of the Absolute, rather than an operation of Hegelian philosophy, is an objective and real operation that society itself performs." To the same extent, as we have said, Hegelian logic objectively reproduces the proper movement of capital as an alienated subject of capitalist society.

Bellofiore gives an account of the process by which value is transformed into the autonomized general social relation, whose specificity consists in having as its object, not the production of use values for the reproduction of human life, but more of itself, that is, capital. A relationship that, he clarifies together with Taylor, when reproduced does the same with social classes and the relationship of exploitation that constitutes them.[0]

For Bellofiore, capital has as its condition the absorption of the labor capacity carried in the body of the working class. At this point, the class struggle arises as a moment that capital must successfully endure in order to absorb labor power, incorporating it into its own materiality. The working class, as an internal other (a term that Bellofiore recovers from Arthur), must become an appendage of capital; In case of resisting this "internalization", this resistance must be broken, since the productive consumption of labor power, the realization of the capacity to work in living labor, is its own presupposition. Since there is no way to use labour power other than by consuming the body in which it is carried, that of the working class, its material support, its struggle has to be defeated in order for capital to carry out the action that determines it. That is, it must internalize the living labor of labor power as an activity capable of valorizing value. However, it is not certain that he will succeed. Bellofiore writes:

> Marx's capital as self-valorising value is confirmed as akin to Hegel's Absolute Idea, seeking to actualise itself while reproducing its own entire conditions of existence. However, capital's zombie-life is dependent on a social condition: *capital must win the class-struggle in production, a 'contested terrain'*: it has to suck away from workers their life, so that it may come back to life as 'undead'. Workers

> *may* resist their incorporation as internal moment of capital: this surmountable 'barrier' or 'obstacle' [*Schranke*] may become an insurmountable 'limit' [*Grenze*], when *conflict* becomes *antagonism* (...) The totality of capital exists only to the extent to which it constitutes a specific social relation of production, which *cannot be taken for granted* as if it were reproduced mechanically. The social, antagonistic relation of production 'opens' the totality of capital, and to a certain extent 'breaks' it."

The class struggle opens up capital, in the sense that the triumph of capital over the working class – its internal other – which is its condition of existence, cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, even critically, Bellofiore points out that Marx slips the possibility of a philosophy of history that aims at the reappropriation by the working class of its alienated powers in capital.

Bellofiore says in the quote that we recover that capital is similar to the Absolute Idea because it sets its conditions of existence, and this fact is what makes it a Subject: "Marx here gives the *positing of the presupposition* movement as the *ontology of capital as automatic Subject*". Now, if the class struggle opens up this movement, then capital is subject only to the extent that the conflict does not become antagonism. That is to say, capital sets its own presuppositions as long as it has the class struggle as one of the moments of its reproduction, but this, according to Bellofiore, *cannot be taken for granted*. Thus capital is subject whenever it wins the struggle on the terrain of production, internalizing the living body from which it can extract surplus value since, again, labor must be extracted from the body of the working class. This is because, again, labor belongs to both capital – which acquired the right to start labor power by buying it in the market – and the working class. Hence the contradiction that capital is going through, according to Bellofiore.

From our perspective, for Bellofiore capital *is not a subject*, since it cannot guarantee that all its conditions of existence will be set by itself. It becomes a subject by preventing the open resistance of the working class, but this impediment *can* become absolute to it.

Hegelian ontology, whose content transposes into the Idea the proper movement of capital as a subject, assumes that its circular movement is guaranteed. Hence, for the same reason as we said above that capital, according to Bellofiore's own terms, is not a subject – because it *may* not set all its conditions of existence – Hegel's ontology constitutes its apologetics, since it takes for granted that the struggle of the working class will not obstruct its *subjective* movement. In other words, while, according to Bellofiore, for Marx, capital would need to prove itself as a subject, the Hegelian dialectic would take this character for granted.

It is worth clarifying. Hegel does not even confront capital as a social relation. When we say that his philosophy, for Bellofiore, constitutes the apologetics of capital, we mean that it reflects its movement as if it were a circular one, not that it attributes this movement to capital. That is, apologetics lies in ideally assuming that the subject of the dialectical movement manages to set its own presuppositions, when in reality the subject that is conceptualized by the dialectic does not achieve it. To this attribution, we say, we owe its apologetic character according to Bellofiore.

In short, either:

a) capital is the subject and the Hegelian dialectic shows itself as the specific logic of the object, but then the class struggle is not a possible barrier to its movement, or
b) The class struggle can limit capital, but then it is not a subject and the Hegelian dialectic takes for granted the circle under which capital puts its own conditions of existence, when in reality this circle must be closed by defeating the working class.

We understand that the latter is Bellofiore's position. From it, he finds the specific difference between Hegelian and Marxian dialectics at the expense of denying capital its condition as a subject, since one of its presuppositions may not be set by itself.

Thus, it remains to be elucidated, in our view, what Marx takes from Hegel. That is, if Hegel represents the apologetics of capital by ideally reproducing the movement it *claims to* have; if dialectics does not express the real movement of capital but the appearance of circularity that it seeks to raise, then,
What does Marx read in Hegel? Why would dialectics govern a movement that is not circular, but is mediated in its opening by the class struggle? The main difficulty presented by Bellofiore's proposal, and which it shares with Arthur's, is that it maintains that capital must certify its condition as a subject. Therefore, implicitly, labor is attributed the possibility of destroying it on the basis of a potentiality that is not posed by it. This means emphasizing, in our view, the externality between capital and labor, since, although it is said that labor is an internal-other of capital, the destruction of capital ends up depending on the first pole of duplicity that labor presents, as if it were a question of exclusive properties, which mutually expel each other.

If this is so, again, what is the "rational core"[0] of dialectics? In what aspect does its isomorphy with the real movement of capital, which is not necessarily circular, reside? Let us then proceed to present our approach, which tries to do justice to the assertion that capital is the concrete subject of the capitalist mode of production and that, at the same time, dialectics is not idealistic because it adequately reflects this movement.

Capital as a subject and the idealist character of Hegelian dialectics

In this section, we will show where the idealist character of Hegel's dialectic lies. To do this, in the first place, we will explain what is, for us, the key that makes the "mystical envelope" that dialectics suffers in its hands. In a second moment, we will show what Marx takes from it, to justify that what Hegel presents as a movement of thought conforms to the becoming of capital as a subject, that is, that the idealist character does not respond to the form of the dialectical movement (to which capital would not necessarily respond, according to Bellofiore), but to the subject to which Hegel attributes this movement.

In the capitalist mode of production, the commodity is responsible for allocating the various quotas into which the concrete useful labour necessary for the reproduction of social life will be discharged. This organization, then, is supported by the production of value, a consequence of the fact that the totality of the work necessary to perpetuate society is carried out in the form of private and independent work. The sanction, then, that a given abstract labor expenditure, a simple productive use of the human body, is part of that which is socially necessary, is placed on the changeability of the product of that labor. In other words, it is only by finding a use-value for which to be exchanged, that the result of a quota of privately and independently performed labor is enshrined as part of the labor necessary to produce the use-values that society needs to consume in order to reproduce. For this reason, Marx reiterates that the commodity does not manifest its value in its substance, but does so in the body of another, behaving towards its own determination of changeability by referring to another commodity. We insist, the commodity has no value because it is exchanged; it is exchanged because it has value, and it has value because it is the result of an indirect, that is, private and independent allocation, of the set of concrete useful works that society needs to perform in order to produce the use-values that its metabolism demands with nature.

In the unfolding of the determinations of the commodity, the value they contain is externalized as something opposed to its use-value. That is, universal changeability becomes opposed to the body of each of the commodities, presenting itself in a way external to all. Commodities, therefore, pose one of them as its opposite, the one that represents in itself universal changeability. Money retains the power to dispose of social labour in any of its specific forms, precisely because it is the universal representative of social labour carried out privately and independently. Commodities, therefore, deposit in one of them all the attributes that they individually lack.

With money, the production of use-values shows that it is subordinated to that of value itself; from

simple circulation, the purpose of which is the consumption of a commodity that is withdrawn from the market, arises the need to produce value itself. The substantive value then opens the production process in order to increase, becoming capital. Capital consists of a form of allocation of social labour whose object is not the production of use-values for human life but the production of more of itself as a social relation. It is a subject that goes through its forms, those of merchandise and money, to return to itself with a greater magnitude. It valorizes itself, through the purchase of labor power and the extraction of surplus value, and in this movement it becomes the subject of the social life it organizes.

The alienated subject of capitalist society appears in Hegel's philosophy represented by thought. The latter, whose movement develops by negating each of its determinations in order to assert itself in them, according to Hegel sets *itself in motion.* That is, he appears in his philosophy abstracted from any determination by social being. Now, this abstraction of thought from its material determinations is the result of the very alienated way in which social labor is organized. Marx says:

> The man who is estranged from himself is also the thinker who is estranged from his *essence*, that is, from the natural and human essence. Their thoughts are, therefore, spirits that live outside of Nature and man. In his *Logic*, Hegel has enclosed all these spirits together and has understood each one of them, first as a negation, that is, as an *alienation* of human thought, then as a negation of the negation, that is, as the overcoming of this alienation, as the *true* externalization of human thought; but, imprisoned itself even in estrangement, This negation of the negation is, in part, the restoration of these spirits in estrangement, in part the fixation in the last act, the relation—to themselves—in the alienation as true existence of these spirits. (That is, Hegel places in place of that fixed abstraction the act of abstraction that revolves around itself (...)).[0]

We affirm, in line with Marx's argument, that Hegel turns abstraction around itself since it is the estranged thought of the human being, his subject. Now, Marx indicates that this estranged thought is that of estranged humanity (*entfremdete*). This implies, in our view, that it is the very alienation of humanity in the product of its labor that explains the estranged thought, external to it, placed by Hegel as its own engine, as a thought that turns on itself and establishes the social relations with which humanity produces its life. It is, for us, a question of thought set in motion by itself, alienated, as a result of the alienation produced by the organization of social labor by capital.

Thus, Hegel takes the autonomous becoming of the subject of social life, capital, which sets itself in motion in order to produce more of itself, as if it were the autonomization of the human form in charge of organizing this work, consciousness. Instead of seeing how the generic need to reproduce life through work takes the form of an alienated social relation, which makes consciousness equally alienated, he conceives the autonomization of the social relation as if it were the autonomization of consciousness, its setting itself in motion. Again, insofar as consciousness is in charge of organizing social labor, the organization autonomized in the value that is valorized is presented to this consciousness, in its Hegelian form, as the autonomy of itself from its material determinations. We believe that the following words of Marx go in this direction: "The philosophical spirit is in turn nothing but the alienated spirit of the world which thinks within its self-alienation, that is, which grasps itself in an abstract form. Logic is the *money* of the spirit, the *thought value;* It is the speculative thought of man and nature; its essence, which has become totally indifferent to all real determination and is therefore unreal; it is the *alienated thought* which therefore abstracts from nature and from the real man; abstract thought."

Hegel's dialectic abstracts from the social relations that humanity engages in order to produce its life. This abstract, alienated thought responds, according to Marx, to the fact that the real human being himself is alienated. What we maintain here is that this abstraction of the thought of its subject occurs because the subject of social life under the capitalist mode of production is an autonomous one, it is the value in the process of valorization. This subject, which is the social relation materialized in the product of labor, opens the process of social production in order to produce more of itself. It is, therefore, an automatic process, which sets itself in motion. Hegel, in our view, transposes this process to

consciousness, as if it had the capacity to set in motion its own movement, when it is a question of the human attribute that organizes the discharge of social labor. It is thus the automatic character of the alienated social relation that determines the alienated character of consciousness, and this alienated form is presented to Hegel as the capacity of thought to set itself in motion. Marx says: "The estrangement of consciousness is not considered as an *expression* (an expression that is reflected in knowledge and thought) of the real estrangement of the human essence."

In this way, Hegel is not confronted with the fact that consciousness is alienated in the social relation that has become automatic. On the contrary, he attributes to thought the capacity to "turn on itself", to set itself in motion, to be, in our view, *automatic*. That is, Hegel attributes to thought, because he is unaware of its material determinations, the character of capital as the automatic subject of the organization of social life. It does so because the very alienation of humanity determines the appearance of an alienated thought, which, in the hands of Hegel, takes the form of a consciousness abstracted from its material determinations. In this estranged character of the alienated real being lies the mystifying aspect of Hegelian dialectics.

Hegel's dialectic places thought as the subject of existing reality and the one that determines it. In other words, it makes thought the subject that puts itself in the other of it. Hegel, in this form, reproduces the fetishization of consciousness in the commodity, separating consciousness from its real attributes. Here, in our view, lies the idealist character of his philosophy and not, as Bellofiore affirms, in hypostasizing a movement that does not conform to that of capital. From our perspective, the dialectical movement, whose subject for Hegel is thought, presides over the transition of capital as the subject of social life under the capitalist mode of production. Precisely, the power of Hegelian philosophy consists in having made explicit the general determinations of this movement. Its mystifying character, then, does not lie in presenting a movement to which capital does not adjust in reality, but in abstracting thought from its material determinations, making it the engine of its unfolding.

Now, to complete our argument, it is necessary to justify what we think Marx takes from Hegel. Since we say that capital, because it is the subject of capitalist society, conforms to the dialectical movement presented by Hegel, we will proceed to show what this movement consists of and in what sense it presides over the path of value in the process of valorization. For Hegel, the principle that explains the organization of every society is a certain figure of the spirit that is realized in it and that is overcome as consciousness experiences the contradiction that gives rise to it. In this experience he reaches his own concept, which is "the *science* of *knowledge that manifests itself*". This knowledge that manifests itself is the transit of consciousness, which affirms itself by denying its own determinations. But with this negation, Hegel does not aim to make consciousness reject its determinations in order to assert its independence. In fact, he rejects that the freedom of conscience depends on maintaining an external link with its own determinations.

For Hegel, the will is not the activity of abstracting oneself from all determination, presenting oneself as a pure possibility of confronting the existent. The will is to give itself a determinate existence and, at the same time, to remain and reproduce itself as will in this determination. That is what freedom consists of: "But the truth of this formal universality, indeterminate in itself, and which finds its determination in that matter, is *the universality that determines itself, the will, freedom.*" This means that being free does not imply separating oneself from one's own determinations, abstracting oneself from them as if they were limits to one's will over one's own individuality, but, on the contrary, it implies having oneself as one's object, recognizing oneself as the limit that one's own will gives to itself. That is, to remain identical in separation, to affirm oneself as one in the negation of unity. In short, for Hegel, freedom consists in the recognition of one's own determinations. It is not a question, then, of making of the free will that which rejects from itself the figures that the ego takes – according to Hegel's words, the free will necessarily has the form of an ego – but of the existence of that ego as determined. Free consciousness is, in this way, that which knows of its own determinations, which knows itself to be determined, and which finds its freedom in determination, by taking it as its object. Thus, Hegel develops a form of knowledge that

does not oppose determination and freedom as external things. He says:

> Only in these three moments has the concept of self-consciousness been fulfilled: a) the pure undifferentiated self from its first immediate object b) But this immediacy is itself absolute mediation, it is only as it supersedes the independent object, or it is appetite. The satisfaction of appetite is, certainly, the reflection of self-consciousness in itself or the certainty that has become truth. c) But the truth of this certainty is, rather, the duplicate reflection, the doubling of self-consciousness. It is an object for consciousness, which places in itself its other being or difference as something null, thus being independent (...) In so far as a self-consciousness is the object, it is both the self and the object.

Self-consciousness thus synthesizes this generic movement of consciousness in which it becomes what it is by denying its successive figures. In other words, self-consciousness shows how consciousness (as for Hegel anything else) is realized by denying its own negations, affirming itself in them.

For Hegel, every determination passes through its own movement to another, so that affirming itself through its own negation is proper to everything real, without being exclusive to the spirit. However, it is only with the science of the spirit, the unfolded form of the spirit itself, i.e., with Hegel's philosophy, that the generic movement of affirmation through self-negation becomes conscious.

The movement that in science becomes conscious Hegel calls remaining in itself in being outside itself, and considers it the most general determination of the real, the heart of the dialectical movement. Here, in our view, lies the "rational core" of his philosophy. So, what Marx rescues from dialectics in its Hegelian form, we say, is the movement of affirming oneself through one's own negation. Marx writes:

> From the point of view of labour, its activity in the process of production is presented in this way: labour separates from itself its fulfilment under objective conditions, as an alien reality, and at the same time and consequently places itself as a capacity for labour deprived of substance, merely endowed with needs and confronted with this its alienated reality. that it does not belong to her but to another; Labor does not pose its own reality as being for itself, but as mere being for another, and therefore also as being-of-another-way, or being of the other, opposed to itself. This process of realization is at the same time the process of unrealization of work. Labor poses itself objectively, but it posits this objectivity as its own non-being or as the being of its non-being: capital.[0]

Marx makes explicit in the same sense that capital constitutes the subject of social life under the capitalist mode of production because it places commodities (among which labor power is counted) and money, which in simple circulation appear as opposing elements, as its own moments, that is, as figures in which it preserves itself. The commodity and money then contain the need to pass on to the other, annulling their own autonomy to become garments of a process that through them relates to itself. Consequently, capital, in each of its phases, poses itself as true autonomy, as a movement that sets its own presuppositions and travels through them without perishing. This is the dialectic that makes him the subject of social life. And this reference to the subjective character of movement is the same as that made by Hegel in the famous fragment of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* , pointing to the becoming of substance into subject: "The fact that the true is only real as a system or that the substance is essentially a subject is expressed in the representation that enunciates, the absolute as *spirit*, the highest concept of all and which belongs to the modern age and its religion. Only the spiritual is the *real*; it is the essence or being *in itself*, that which is maintained and determined— the *being other* and the *being for itself*—and that which remains in itself in this determinability or in its being outside itself or is *in and for itself*."

That is, for both Marx and Hegel, the subject of dialectical movement is that which remains in itself by putting forth the forms it traverses – capital in the case of Marx, the absolute spirit in the case of Hegelian phenomenology. It is then a question of the general determinations of dialectics, which indicate that each moment transcends another by its own immanent contradiction. In contrast to

Bellofiore's thesis, here lies what Marx takes from Hegel, which explains why he takes capital as the subject of social life under the capitalist mode of production.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to read the link between Marx and Hegel by Riccardo Bellofiore, who is registered in the DS. We focused on Bellofiore's work because his line of research represents one of the most widespread trends within perspectives on the subject. This line, whose fundamental contribution was the production of Lucio Colletti, maintains that the idealist character of the Hegelian dialectic responds to the fact that it ideally expresses the real movement of capital as an alienated social relation. However, in this expression, according to Bellofiore, Hegel attributes to the dialectic of the absolute a circularity that capital lacks. For Bellofiore, capital does not necessarily reach the status of subject, since in its course it must break the resistance of the working class, a subject-other capable of slowing down the future of capital as a social relation that sets its own presuppositions. Thus, the Hegelian dialectic would postulate a fully circular and self-founded subject, while capital would have to triumph in its struggle against the working class in order to achieve this condition. Hegel's idealism would reside, precisely, in being the peculiar logic of the peculiar object that capital represents, but transposing the movement of this object as if it were necessarily capable of setting its own presuppositions.

Our main objection to Bellofiore's reasoning has been that Hegel's philosophy is idealistic in his argument because capital is not the subject of social production and consumption. For if capital were able to put all its presuppositions into place, then it would be a self-founded subject just like the Hegelian absolute. In other words, if capital could necessarily put the class struggle as one of its moments, then, in line with Arthur's argument, Bellofiore would have to accept that the Hegelian dialectic of the absolute equally governs the movement of capital as a subject.

In contrast to Bellofiore's proposal, our thesis is that capital is the full subject of social life under the capitalist mode of production, despite which the Hegelian dialectic has an idealist character. This is because the idealist mood responds to the fact that Hegel makes thought the subject of its own unfolding, autonomizing it from the material determinations that explain it. This, in our view, is the result of the fact that capital as a general social relation is the autonomous subject of social life. That is to say, our hypothesis is that Hegel represents to himself the autonomization of capital as a subject, the fact of going through its figures negating them in order to affirm himself in them, as if this were that of thought with respect to its social determinations. Hegel, then, transposes the objectified social relation in the product of labor, which moves to produce more of itself, to the terrain of thought, attributing to consciousness what capital holds. Consequently, Hegel objectively describes the general determinations of the dialectical movement, which are summed up when Marx indicates that:

> Hegel conceived the negation of the negation, in accordance with the positive aspect implicit in it, as the true and only positive thing, and in accordance with the implicit negative aspect, as the only true act and act of self-affirmation of all being, he found only the *abstract, logical, speculative* expression for the movement of history. which is not yet *the real* history of man as a presupposition subject, but only *a generic act* of man, *the history of the birth* of man.

The rational core of Hegelian dialectics lies in having developed the general forms of this movement, the cornerstone of which is the negation of the negation. Bellofiore separates the unity between the subjective and objective forms that social being takes. It does so by attributing to the working class the possibility of interrupting the evolution of capital on the basis of a power that is partially external to the latter. By insisting on the unity of the forms of objectivity and subjectivity that social being takes, dialectical knowledge is determined as the conscious organization of human practice under the capitalist mode of production and, therefore, as the revolutionary science of the working class. Science that implies the conscious knowledge of its own determinations, which takes knowledge as a form of transformative practice; neither as a part, nor as an action that relates to it from the outside.

Dialectical knowledge, as a practical critique, refuses to consider that certain material conditions limit or enhance it externally. By penetrating the apparent forms that its own transforming action takes, it places itself within it, as one of its powers. For this reason, in the critique of any perspective that poses the externality between knowledge and action, the terrain of the materiality of concrete human practice is never abandoned.